

REMARKS

The applicant thanks the examiner for the telephonic interview of December 12, 2005.

Independent claims 1 and 7 are amended to more explicitly set forth the distinction between the claimed invention and the disclosure of *Morar*, U.S. Patent No. 6,678,822.

Morar discloses a system for *obscuring* sensitive data in a container. The examiner considers *Morar*'s disclosure of obscuring data to correspond to the claimed step of encrypting. But *Morar* does not disclose encrypting a first character string into a second character string, each character in the second character string being selected from said restricting character set, *the first character string uniquely corresponding to the second character string*.

The examiner appears to consider the claimed first character string to correspond to the unobscured text in *Morar*, and the second character string to correspond to the obscured text. But the obscuring process described by *Morar* is irreversible; thus, the first character string (the unobscured text) does not uniquely correspond to the second character string (the obscured text).

The particular section of *Morar* identified by the examiner describes a process including "steps of substituting an occurrence of a deleted predetermined type of information content with another example of the predetermined type of content."¹ For example, a noun may be replaced with another noun, or digits with other digits, or a social security number of the form XXX-XX-XXXX with nine other randomly-selected digits.²

Significantly, this described process is *irreversible*. For example, in the case of the social security numbers, the digits to replace the social security numbers are selected *randomly*.³ Because the substitution is selected randomly, the sensitive data does not "uniquely correspond" to the obscured data, as required by claims 1 and 7 as amended. A particular sensitive piece of data has no "unique correspondence" with the data that replaces it.

Morar reinforces this observation in describing an exemplary use of the invention: filtering sensitive information from electronic mail. If it were possible, using the method of *Morar*, to reverse the process of obscuring data, then one could simply replace sensitive

¹ *Morar*, 8:61-63.

² *Morar*, 8:65-9:14.

³ *Morar*, 9:9-14.

information in a message with an encrypted version of that information, such that the encrypted information could be decrypted by the intended recipient. But that is *not* what *Morar* describes. Instead, *Morar* describes obscuring sensitive information in the body of the email message, irreversibly. The intended recipient, in order to obtain the obscured information, must decrypt a separate encrypted attachment to the email message, the separate attachment including an encrypted version of the data that was obscured.⁴

Applicant acknowledges the examiner's observation that *Morar* defines obscuring data to include encryption.⁵ But, as explained above, the "encryption" described by *Morar* is not reversible, and therefore does not meet the claim limitation as amended.

For the foregoing reasons, the applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 7 are patentable over *Morar*. Each of the remaining claims is dependent on either claim 1 or 7 and is patentable for at least the same reason.

Applicant amends the claims solely to expedite prosecution of this application. The amendments are not to be construed as an admission that the claims prior to amendment are unpatentable. Furthermore, in addition to the above arguments, there may be other good grounds for patentability of the claims.

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$395 for the Request for Continued Examination Transmittal small entity fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

⁴ *Morar*, 12:31-46.

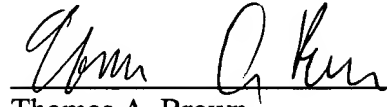
⁵ *See Morar*, 4:55.

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Respectfully submitted,

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